



Commonwealth of Kentucky
Office of the Governor

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**Governor Beshear Announces Launch of Work Ready Communities
Certification**

New program assures local employers of skilled workforce

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Aug. 16, 2011) – Thanks to the launch of Work Ready Communities by the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board (KWIB) today, Governor Beshear announced today that Kentucky counties can now be certified as “work ready” based on the quality of their labor force.

The new program is designed to transform local economies and give counties a competitive advantage in attracting new businesses and jobs.

“We have business and industry in Kentucky that require a skilled workforce. This program provides us with a way to prove it, county by county,” said Gov. Steve Beshear. “In addition, the program promotes collaboration among key community stakeholders including education, economic development, elected officials, employers, workforce agencies and community organizations as they work toward common community goals.”

Earning Certified Work Ready Community status assures that local workforces have the talent necessary to staff existing jobs and to master the innovative technologies new jobs will require in the future.

Each community must gather local support and commitment and apply for the Work Ready Community designation. To earn certification, counties will have to meet established criteria in six specific areas:

- high school graduation rate,
- National Career Readiness Certificate holders,
- demonstrated community commitment,
- educational attainment,
- soft skills development, and
- digital literacy.

“The community experience of the application process is a valuable component of achieving Work Ready status,” said Education and Workforce Development Cabinet Secretary Joseph U. Meyer. “As a state, we must focus on the importance of setting workforce and economic development goals, and this program allows us to develop a framework and work together as communities toward those goals.”

Communities close to meeting the criteria will be awarded the distinguished designation of Work Ready Community in Progress. To achieve this status, a county must present a viable plan to meet all of the criteria within three years. This designation demonstrates that a community is making strides and working with its business community to improve.

“We understand that achieving Work Ready status may be difficult, but the bar must be set high for the certification to have meaning to employers,” said Kentucky Economic Development Cabinet Secretary Larry Hayes. “Work Ready status shows employers and prospective employers that a county has the talented workforce that business demands – a sustainable pipeline that delivers the right workers with the right skills at the right time.”

Applications will be reviewed by a panel appointed by the KWIB. That panel will then recommend certification by the board for those counties that meet the criteria. The panel will meet three times per year and applications may be submitted at any time of the year.

For more information about the criteria and how to apply for certification, go to <http://kwib.ky.gov/workreadycommunity.htm>

The Work Ready Communities program will be featured at the Governor's Local Issues Conference at the Galt House in Louisville on Aug. 18 at 9:45 a.m. Eastern time. For more information on the conference, visit <http://www.dlg.ky.gov/localissues/>

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